

WASHINGTON – U.S. Rep. Harry Mitchell and an overwhelming bipartisan majority in the House of Representatives voted to temporarily suspend the filling of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve through the end of the year. The move is anticipated to lower the cost of gasoline.

The Strategic Petroleum Reserve Fill Suspension and Consumer Protection Act was approved by a strong, bipartisan vote of 385 to 25. The U.S. Senate passed a similar measure earlier today by a vote of 97-1.

"Gas prices are at an all-time high," said Mitchell. "This is a common-sense move that will provide some much-needed relief at the pump."

The SPR is "currently is 97 percent full at 701 million barrels, equal to two months of oil imports." Filling the SPR takes 70,000 barrels of oil off the market each day. [Source: CNN.com, May 13, 2008]

A temporary suspension could reduce gas prices from 5 to 24 cents a gallon.